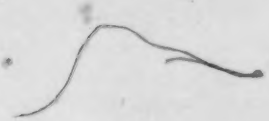
462
[503] Besides the work in rice-fields, women dug and cleaned
[226] canals and ditches, mounded land, and fished in many ways, the most laborious of which was plunging a heavy basket into the mud to catch burrowing fish. In the household chores, in which men shared to some extent, they carried water, cut and fetched wood, tended livestock, cultivated kitchen gardens, [501] pounded rice in mortars, and cleaned houses. Boats were rowed by paddling or sculled by standing and pushing a single large [354] oar. Cooking was time consuming. The low stoves were on the ground or floor. Since there were no tables or chairs, one [352] squatted two to four hours a day to cut or pound ingredients, [516] stir the curry, or wash the dishes.

868 The training of boys and girls for farm and household
561 work was thorough and started early. By 10 years of age,
461 boys and girls with few exceptions were experienced in every step of farming. Janlekha's chart (1955:82) indicates the progression (parenthetical additions are the present author's):

Age	Method	Kinds of farm work
5 - 7	not forced, but allowed or induced to work if they want to	light hauling, removal of weeds which have been turned over by harrowing
8 - 12	mild pressure	light hauling, removal of weeds which have been turned over by harrowing; some household work and help in the kitchen - girls only - (sometimes boys)
13 - 14	moderate pressure	hauling, weeding, buffalo-tending, transplanting, chicken-feeding, fishing, household work (boys and girls)
15 - 16	high pressure	all kinds of farm work, harrowing, harvesting, and uprooting - boys only - are started at this age.

872 Children worked in the fields before and after school
461 which, compulsory for all children aged eight to fourteen, was held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. five and one-half days a week. Vacations coincided with peak work seasons so children could help in the fields or at home.



Housing

342 The type of house, whether big or lowly, made a difference in the comfort and care of women. The big houses were teak-paneled and floored with a good roof of thatch, tile or corrugated iron. Their high piles insured dryness during flood season. The sleeping and living space was a single airy open room, often with one or two sides balustraded rather than solid, and protected from the weather by the roof's overhang. The kitchen was sometimes a separate room. There was always one small enclosed room, perhaps ten feet square, or larger, with a door and a window. This room was used for keeping valuables under lock, and whenever privacy was desired: as a marriage chamber for bride and groom, or as a quiet room for a senile parent. Because of its almost solid walls, it was poorly [844] ventilated and hot. Childbirth took place in this little room, if convenient, or out in the main part of the house. The fire-rest was in this room so that the dreaded wind could be kept out.

342 The poor lived in modest earth-floored cottages of bamboo
184 frame, thatch sides and roof, with one or two raised wood plat-
• 352 forms for sleeping and sitting. In the rainy season, these
844 cottages could be damp. In fact, one October the water was observed ankle deep inside a house, and the wife splashed around at her chores. Under the latter conditions, a woman in childbirth would be moved to some kinsmen's house. Delivery took place on one of the sleeping plarforms, and post-partum rest was on a plank raised off the earth floor, unless space permitted that the plank and temporary fire-floor be placed on the platform. On one observed occasion reed mats as protection from drafts were temporarily set up, making an enclosure about three feet high within which a mother lay in her post-partum rest period.

434 Cash

426 Cash was short to everyone. The poor felt very poor and the rich did not feel rich. This was because the rice-money, [556] which came in a lump sum once or twice a year, was at once turned over to clear debts, to make large purchases of agricultural equipment, to repair the house, or to perform elaborate ceremonies. What was left over was not kept around the house for day-to-day expenses for fear of robbery, but was immedi-
434 ately loaned out. Thus cash was not available for emergencies
844 which in childbirth might mean taxis or hospital care. Being
556 rich or poor made little difference in Bang Chan, however, as to the quality of the obstetrical help given.

443 noodles. Their prices were higher than in Minburi or Bangkok, but their service was such a convenience that many people rarely went to town. Some adults in Bang Chan had never been to Bangkok though almost all had visited Minburi, about 3 [431] miles from the temple. Venders often extended credit, and also accepted items such as fresh fish, fruit, and eggs on a barter basis, thus providing an outlet for small amounts of home products. When the subsidiary canals were dry, however, venders could not get to some parts of the village.

Home Sites and Houses

General Arrangement

361 487 Since the canals provided the chief means of local transportation for much of the year, and also supplied water for many household uses, houses were built near the canal, usually within sight of a neighbor's. Home sites were mounded up to a level of two or three feet above that of the fields, but even so, water might cover the mound at the peak of the rainy season. Old wooden houses were set in a grove of bamboo, bananas and other fruit trees and vines, occa- 343 sionally betel and coconut palms. Nearby might be a shed for the water buffalo which were the draught animals used in farming. Rarely one saw a walled privy.[1] On the same mound might be a cottage built by parents for married children or by an affluent farmer for a hired hand. In this case, the threshing floor, firewood from trees on the mound, and area 342 for kitchen garden would be shared. Many houses were built on stilts to avoid flooding when the water level was high. If the house was elevated sufficiently, the area underneath provided a relatively cool shelter during the hot season for the buffalo, and even for family members for some of their daytime activities.

Depending on the resources of the family, houses were built of either thatch or wood, roofed with thatch, galvan- 352 ized iron or occasionally, tile. Split bamboo or matting might be used for dividing walls if the house had more than one room. Wooden flooring was usual, but in simpler thatched houses with dirt floors, the buffalo might be sheltered under the same roof with the family. In such a house, one or more low wooden platforms were built for sitting and sleeping. Wide cracks between floor boards conveniently permitted betel 364 chewers to spit without the need for a spittoon. Those who 267 were preparing food or clearing up after a meal could also thus discard refuse or dispose of leftover food that was to 364 be given to chickens, without leaving the kitchen. Some

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1. cf. Hauck, 1956, p. 45-6 for description of latrine facilities.

364 garbage was customarily fed to animals. As previously reported (Hauck, 1956) "Each family seemed to have its own pattern for disposal of garbage which was not fed to stock. Those who threw it in the canal, did so consistently, except when the nearby canal was dry, and those who threw garbage elsewhere, did this consistently. No one was observed to burn or bury garbage."

The Kitchen Area

354 In the larger houses, the kitchen was usually a small separate room with a wooden floor and at least one window for ventilation. A low table or wooden case with sides built up several inches, and filled with clay, served as the "fireplace." On this stood the clay stove, and hot pans and pots were set there when removed from the fire. In homes with an earthen floor, the fireplace might be built directly on the ground. The clay stove was several inches high, shaped so that rice pots and curved frying pans would fit into the large segment of a circle which was its top. An open space was left in front to facilitate building and maintaining the fire. Firewood was kept nearby. Most families also had a portable clay stove in which charcoal was burned. This might be used as an auxiliary unit, for outdoor cooking on a hot day or when traveling by boat.

Matches, although available, were hard to protect from dampness. Kerosene filled cigarette lighters of a cheap and efficient type were commonly used. As kindling, one might use coconut husks or purchase resinous bits of wood that would hold a flame for sometime.

Although only a small amount of firewood was needed, as it was used for cooking only, local supplies were inadequate. In all seasons, some was brought in from other areas. One family participating in the survey planted trees each year for firewood. The wife in another household used to return to her parents' home to gather a boatload of wood as needed. Because charcoal was more expensive than wood, and none was produced in the village, it was used for home cooking by only about 10 per cent of the village families, primarily those such as storekeepers and venders who did not have time to cut firewood.

352 In many kitchens clean dishes were placed upside down on
251 a slatted wooden rack. The other common item of furniture was a free standing ventilated cupboard or food safe. At its best, this was screened, and the legs antproofed in some way, as by putting them into small containers partially filled with kerosene, or rubbing them with powdered pitch; but relatively few
251 village families had such well constructed food safes. Families that did not own a food safe often kept leftover cooked foods in a basket, or covered with large dishes on a tray. Fish and sugar must be kept away from ants, but cooked rice,

APPENDIX A

Description of the Kitchen and Some Notes on Food Preparation in a Relatively Prosperous Household[1]

Friday, May 22, 1953

Arrived at 5:15 a.m. When we reached the house, the mother was holding the dog. The house was dark, and we walked around sleeping babies and children. . . . . The 15 year old niece who prepares meals here, was already at work. For light she had an oil lamp, a tin of about 1 pt. capacity, with wick. The rice was already measured, but she waited until SS could weigh it, before putting it on to cook. SS used her flashlight to see the scale and her notebook.

The kitchen here has a thatched roof, well smoked, but the walls and "windows" are of woven split bamboo. A sliding wooden "window" can be pushed back to allow access to a broad shelf outside. Here a large pan of pond water is kept, so that dishes may be rinsed and hands rinsed after each operation. Dishes are stacked upside down, on a wooden rack nearby, to dry.

The stove area in the corner has place for one fire, but several places for pots to stand. Downstairs, under the shed near the fish pond, is a larger clay stove, where the niece cooks the rice in the morning (enough for noon as well) and some other items; for example the (3)khii-(2)leg leaves which were cooked last night for use in sour curry this a.m. This probably keeps the kitchen cooler than it would otherwise be. Waste, fish bones, vegetable parings, etc., which are to be given to the chickens, can be thrown below through the space between two floor levels (kitchen and main rooms).

Rice water, coconut water, and food left in the serving bowls when the meal is over, are given to the dogs. A bowl is kept below, near where rice is drained, for dog food. Food left in pots is kept for humans to eat.

Fish caught in the pond are kept alive in pond water, in a water jar. When a fish is wanted, the niece catches one from the jar, stuns it with the back of her knife, and scales and cleans it on a split log nearby (rounded side of log up). The fish is put into a small basket, and the niece

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1. In reproducing these notes, slight changes have been made such as substitution of descriptive terms for personal names which appeared in the original.

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117 takes it down the steps to the fish pond, where she swishes
252 the basket around to wash the fish, and rinses her hands at the same time.

[29] There are some hazards to the food--chickens trying to get at the edible part of fish while the niece cleans it (she leaves the scales, etc. for them to eat); cat and kittens in the kitchen, having to be driven away from the grated coconut and coconut milk, and getting an occasional unweighed nip. Whether we start to weigh food for the evening meal or a.m. meal, some cooked foods are apt to be used, either left over
[262] from a previous meal, or cooked in advance. This a.m., for
[126] example, buffalo meat, already cooked (but not weighed before cooking) was used, and (3)khii-(2)leg leaves, which SS weighed last night. These latter were cooked last night, to reduce bitterness, then put into curry today.

Description of Food Preparation Area in a Relatively Poor Household

Wednesday, May 27, 1953

117 Arrived about 5:45 a.m. While other food was being pre-
[262] pared, the 11-year old son came in with a package of salted white radish and a small milk tin with some coconut oil which had just been bought. This is the house which we found flooded when they sent for us to see the baby last fall. The roof seems to be well thatched. The floor is not wet after last
[158] night's downpour. The bed platform, in one corner, is about
[85] 8 x 10 feet. The baby's cradle hangs above it. In the oppo-
[162] site corner is a shelf where utensils are kept. Some food,
[26] in paper bags, is in a basket hung from the roof. Fresh fish
[359] is kept in a jar of water until needed. The stove is on a small mound of earth, and further elevated on a small box (just big enough for the stove) filled with earth.

[158] We sit on a mat, spread on the mud floor, with the
[356] scales, plastic bowls and waxed paper ready for weighing food. The children lie on a mat nearby. In the house is a fresh mound of earth, a small straw bin with rice, and various pieces of equipment.

*177 22
*178

207 Exposure to the media of mass communication seems to act, in
a sense, as a substitute for literacy. It may be that through
212 these means either an illiterate farmer can obtain information
546 about the more complex agricultural tools and methods or motivation
to try improvements, or both, even though he may not know how to
read and write. One may infer that he tends to act on the infor-
mation thus obtained, since he is more likely than his unexposed
opposite number to try out these innovations.

*178
*177 Acceptance of Urban Patterns

369 The printed word and the mass media are, of course, not solely
channels for the communication of knowledge. They are, at the
same time a means whereby the farmers may establish some sort of
contact with the more sophisticated world outside the community
even with highly urban Bangkok.

The survey indicates in a general way the extent to which
[291] the people of Bang Chan have accepted urban patterns. Their grow-
[416] ing acceptance of urban modes is readily apparent even to a casual
[207] visitor: many own shoes, flashlights, wrist watches, radios,
[493] bicycles, fountain pens, modern furniture.* Other urban behavior
[413] is likewise beginning to be noticeable.
[358]

One very simple indication of the degree to which urban in-
fluences have penetrated is the change in manners of taking
food. The farmers traditionally eat with their hands rather than
using a fork or spoon. In Bangkok, however, eating utensils are
customarily served with the meals in restaurants and are widely
*177 adopted as well by the city population. Some Bang Chan inhabi-
*178 tants have picked up this simple urban custom and have substituted
it for eating mainly with their hands. In Bang Chan of 1955, for
264 example, a sizeable minority (26 per cent) report that they use a
369 spoon, fork or both for the evening meal.

That such a simple question can roughly measure exposure
[207] to urban influences, is indicated in the following table, which
[546] shows that respondents who report customarily eating with "urban
utensils" are more likely to be exposed frequently to radio and
motion pictures and are more likely to have visited in Bangkok.

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[412] * Survey respondents report that their households possess a
flashlight (81 per cent); scissors (54 per cent); kerosene lamp
(27 per cent); radio (14 per cent). About 41 per cent say they
own at least one pair of shoes.